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Three Arguments to Rebut the "Neglected Alternative" Objection

Makoto SUZUKI

Introduction

This paper tries to show the failures of three arguments suggested by Kant scholars to save Kant's Transcendental Idealism from a famous criticism, i.e., the "neglected alternative" objection. I will argue that all of the three arguments are wanting for one reason or another.

Kant's Transcendental Idealism has been typically interpreted as the thesis that space is, along with time, merely a subjective condition of human cognition, specifically sensibility, and neither a thing in itself (substance) nor a property of or relation among things in themselves[1]. Kant seems to express this view about space, for example, in the first paragraph of the "Conclusions from the above concepts" in The First Section of The Transcendental Aesthetic of *Critique of Pure Reason*:

> Space represents no property at all of things in themselves nor any relation of them to one another, i.e., no determination of them that attaches to objects themselves and

[1] Kant distinguishes two senses of "things in themselves," i.e., the empirical sense and the transcendental sense. Things in themselves in the empirical sense are those capable of being intersubjectively acquainted with among human beings. In contrast, things in themselves in the transcendental sense are, roughly, (the aspects of) things that exist totally independently of human cognition. (A45-6/B62-3) I said "roughly" because the characterization of things in themselves in the transcendental sense is very controversial. See note eight. In the following, I will use the phrase "things in themselves" in the transcendental sense.

that would remain even if one were to abstract from all the subjective conditions of intuition. For neither absolute nor relative determinations can be intuited prior to the existence of the things to which they pertain, thus be intuited *a priori*. (A26/B42[2])[3]

According to Kemp Smith (112-3), Adolf Trendelenburg, who popularized the "neglected alternative" objection, objects to Kant about the argument as he (and Norman Kemp Smith) understands in the passage. They seem to take the above passage to argue roughly in the following way: properties or relations of things in themselves can never be intuited prior to the existence of the things, namely *a priori*; however, as is already proven in the former sections of Exposition, space is intuited *a priori*; therefore, space is neither a property nor a relation of things in themselves.[4] Against such an argument, Kemp Smith reports, Trendelenburg argues as follows:

> Kant recognises only two alternatives, either space as objective is known *a posteriori*, or being an *a priori* representation it is subjective in origin. There exists a third alternative, namely, that though our intuition of space is subjective in origin, space is itself an inherent property of things in themselves. The central thesis of the rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment was, indeed, that the independently real can be known by *a priori* thinking. Even granting the validity of Kant's later conclusion, first drawn in the next paragraph [of "Conclusion from the above concepts"], that space is the subjective form of all external intuition, that would only

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[2] In this and the following, I will follow the convention that "A" numbering refers to the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason* and the "B" numbering to the second, corresponding to the pagination of the German originals.

[3] Though in the quotation Kant does not explicitly deny that a space is a substance or a thing in itself, he denies it, for example, in (A39/B56). Kant's statement about time, which corresponds to the above quotation in point of the content and of its location (appearing in "Conclusions from these concepts" of The Second Section of The Transcendental Aesthetic (A32-3/B49)), explicitly denies both that space is a substance or thing in itself and that space is a property or relation of things in themselves.

[4] I will later come back to examining an interpretation of the argument of the passage.

> prove that it does not belong to *appearances*, prior to our apprehension of them; nothing is thereby proved in regard to the character of things in themselves. We anticipate by *a priori* reasoning only the nature of appearances, never the constitution of things in themselves. Therefore space, even though *a priori*, may belong to the independently real. (Kemp Smith, 113; the phrase in the brackets mine.)[5]

The above passage is only concerned with space, but Trendelenburg's (and Kemp Smith's) point is general:

> Even if we concede the argument that space and time are demonstrated to be subjective conditions which in us, precede perception and experience, there is still no word of proof to show that they cannot at the same time be objective forms. (The translation by Gardner, 107 from Trendelenburg's *Logische Untersuchungen*, 1862, 163)

The general point of Trendelenburg's argument is as follows: Kant illegitimately supposes that space and time are (exclusively) either [1] subjective conditions (as forms of our sensibility) or [2] things in themselves or their properties or relations, and ignores another alternative that they are both; even if it is conceded that space and time are shown to be forms of our sensibility that are a priori represented, by this alone Kant does not rule out the last possibility; and therefore, though Kant's Transcendental Idealism denies that things in themselves are spatiotemporal, this denial is not warranted.[6,7,8]

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[5] Here Kemp Smith or Trendelenburg uses "appearances" in the Kantian sense, i.e., to mean "the undetermined object of an empirical intuition" (A20/B34) or (the aspects of) things that are necessarily conforming to our mode of cognition.

[6] It is also suggested in the quotation from Kemp Smith that Kant's denial of spatiotemporality of things in

themselves appears to be at least in tension with his critical principle "that objects in themselves are not known to us at all[.]" (A30/B45) For in stating that things in themselves are not spatiotemporal, Kant seems to claim that he has the knowledge of the fact about things in themselves, and such a claim of knowledge appears to be the very thing that the critical principle denies. How can Kant consistently claim both theses? The defender of Kant needs to say something on this point. My interpretation of Kant's critical principle is roughly that we can know a proposition about things in themselves only via derivation through logic or conceptual analysis from a set of true propositions about our experience (including true propositions gained through mere reflection); therefore, as far as Kant's claims about things in themselves are derivable in such a way, Kant can claim knowledge to them consistently with his critical principle. However, I neither try in this paper to defend this interpretation of Kant's critical principle nor am concerned with whether his claims about things in themselves are derivable in the above way. I will not do so partly because in this paper I am not going to defend Kant's position and partly because it will take much space.

[7] It is not well known that though the person who popularizes the "neglected alternative" objection is Trendelenburg, the first person who issues this line of objection is one of Kant's contemporaries, Hermann Andreas Pistorius. Pistorius provides a review of Johann Schultze's 'commentary' on the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*, and there he says, conceding to Kant's argument that space and time are the forms of our sensibility, "But none of this precludes the possibility that the concepts of space and time can also have an objective foundation." (Sassen, 97) He further argues that his view that space and time are not only the forms of our sensibility but also the relations in things in themselves is preferable to Kant's view that they are merely the forms of our sensibility and do not belong to things in themselves. Thus, the "neglected alternative" objection was presented even in Kant's lifetime. According to Sassen, the translator of Pistorius' paper, "…Pistorius…only played a critical role in the early reception of the Kantian philosophy. Without a university position and being located in an even greater isolation from the heart of German academic life than Kant (he was a paster on the island of Rügen in the Baltic Sea), Pistorius did not have the influence he should perhaps have had." (Sassen, 16) (Schultz's 'commentary,' which Pistorius commented on, is *Elucidations of Professor Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason*[,]*'* Prussian Court Chaplain. Königsberg: Dengel, 1784. According to Sassen, this is largely a paraphrase of *Critique of Pure Reason* with a few clues for a scrutiny of Kant's system. (Sassen, 14).)

[8] It may be thought that depending on what Kant refers to by "things in themselves" (in the transcendental sense), the "neglected alternative" objection may turn out to be a pseudo-problem. There are two traditions in interpreting "things in themselves" in contrast to "appearances," which are defined by Kant as "[t]he undetermined object of an empirical intuition." (A20/B34) The first tradition, two object view, takes "things in themselves" refer to the sets of things that are ontologically distinct from the sets of objects referred to by "appearances." The second tradition, two aspect view, regards "things in themselves" to refer to the same set of the objects that "appearances" refer to, but while "appearances" refer to the aspects of them that are empirical or can be represented under our mode of cognition, "things in themselves" refer to the aspects of them that are non-empirical and cannot be represented under our mode of cognition. Some interpreters that stand in the second tradition may say that Kant defines things in themselves as the aspects of things devoid of space and time, for space and time are, according to Kant, modes of our cognition; so it is an analytic truth that space and time does not belong to things in themselves.

I neither contend that this rendering of "things in themselves" is a misinterpretation of Kant nor deny that it is analytically true by his stipulative definition that things in themselves are devoid of space and time as

Actually Kant has recognized the "neglected alternative" and provided some arguments that can be taken as efforts to refute the possibility. In *Prolegomena*, Kant conceives of and rejects (a version of) the third alternative concerning space.

> I would very much like to know how then my claims must be framed so as not to contain any idealism. Without doubt I would have to say: that the representation of space not only is perfectly in accordance with the relation that our sensibility has to objects, for I have said that, but that it is even fully similar to the object; an assertion with which I can connect no meaning, as little as with the assertion that the sensation of red is similar to the property of cinnabar that excites this sensation in me. (Kant 1783, 41: the Academy Edition vol.4, 289-90)

This passage is very complicated, but it in effect says that if Kant's position were to be framed so as to avoid any imputation of idealism, it must claim that the representation of space is "not only" a form of our sensibility that objects must conform to "but" also it has a complete analogue in the objects (in themselves). However, according to Kant, this assertion makes no sense; it is like asserting that the phenomenal quality of redness is similar to the property of cinnabar that excites the qualitative mental state. From this

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modes of our cognition. However, the point of the "neglected alternative" objection can be made without reference to the phrase "things in themselves." On two aspect view, the objection can be taken to be that the things referred to by our words "space (Raum)" and "time (Zeit)" can still exist independently of our cognition. The critics claim that Kant may establish that one thing referred to by the term "space" (and the term "time") is a form of sensibility and hence depends on our cognitive faculty, but it does not automatically deny that there can be another thing that is referred to by our term "space" (or the term "time"), which exists independently of our cognition. Kant does claim that space and time are "merely" forms of sensibility (B41-2), that they neither subsist for themselves nor attach to things as objective determinations (A32/B49 & A/39/B56), and that it is a mistake to ascribe "objective reality" to them (B70). Thus, a problem still remains for Kant: how can he deny the possibility that our terms "space" and "time" (at least in some context) refer to the mind-independent existent things?

passage, it is clear that Kant actually does not neglect this alternative entirely.[9]

In addition to the argument in the above passage, Kant provides arguments against the possibility that there are mind-independent space and time. Sebastian Gardner picks up four arguments in "General Remarks" of Aesthetic of *Critique of Pure Reason*: the argument from geometry (A46-9/B64-6), the argument that regarding space and time as properties of things in themselves is transforming everything into mere illusion (B70-1), the argument from the premise that space and time are only relations (B66-8), and the argument from theological consideration (B71-2). Further, Kant has the arguments in Antinomy of *Critique of Pure Reason*, specifically those in the first or the second antinomy, which are concerned with space and time.[10] These arguments, if successful, would repudiate the possibility of the spatiotemporality of things in themselves. However, the commentators on Kant generally have not treated these arguments to successfully establish the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves. For example, Gardner holds that ultimately neither of the four arguments in Antinomy and of the arguments in Antinomy succeeds in this way. (Gardner, 101-4, 112 & 255)[11]

However, sympathetic commentators find or reinterpret other passages of Kant's texts to provide more promising arguments for the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves. In this paper, I will examine three such arguments.

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[9] We will come back to this passage again in examining the interpretations of Kant's argument against the "neglected alternative" objection.

[10] The first antinomy is concerned with the finity/boundedness or infinity/unboundedness of the world in time and space, and the second antinomy is with the existence or non-existence of the simple units of things within space.

[11] Nonetheless, Allison provides a reconstruction of the first antinomy to establish Transcendental Idealism and hence the non-spatiotemporality of things in themselves. See Allison, Ch3, esp. 56-9. The success of the reconstructed argument depends, as Allison himself admits, on the success of Analogies of *Critique of Pure Reason* as Allison interprets, and it is beyond my capacity to adequately examine his interpretation of Analogies; therefore, I will not deal with this reinterpretation of antinomy in this paper.

Before engaging in the examination, I need to make clear the three limitations of the scope of this paper. First, due to the limitation of space in this paper, I will focus the examination primarily on the non-spatiality of things in themselves, and not on their non-temporality. Second, since I am interested in whether Kant provides or can provide a convincing rebuttal against the "neglected alternative" objection, I will suppose that Kant is correct in such claims (1) that space (as we encounter in experience) is a form of human sensibility, (2-1) that space (as we encounter in experience) is represented by us a priori, and (2-2) that some propositions concerning space (as we encounter in experience) are synthetic but known a priori. (It will be a substantial point of dispute whether the qualification of space "as we encounter in experience" is needed or can be omitted. See the next section.) As we see in the first quotation (from Kemp Smith), the proponents of the "neglected alternative" objection, persuaded or for the sake of argument, concede these claims, but still assert that this concession does not lead to the exclusion of the possibility that "space" also refers to something that subsists in itself or attaches to things in themselves, and that Kant does not refute this possibility. Because the correctness of such claims as (1), (2-1) and (2) is presupposed in the context of this objection, I will also treat them as the presuppositions of this paper. Third, though the "neglected alternative" objection can take both a weak from and a strong form, this paper does not provide a full treatment of the strong form of the objection. While the weak form of the objection only argues that there is the possibility that "space" also refers to something that subsists in itself or attaches to things in themselves, the strong form further argues that some version of this alternative is more plausible than Kant's position that space and time are merely the forms of our sensibility. Gardner's characterization of the "neglected alternative" objection involves only the weak form,[12] but Pistorius, the originator of this objection,

[12] Strictly, Gardner takes the disputed possibility of the third alternative merely as conceptual. (107) I am

clearly supports the strong form (See note eight).[13,14] In this paper, due to the limitation of the space of this paper and of my ability, I will be concerned mainly with the weak form of "neglected alternative" objection; I think that this limited inquiry is still valuable since the strong form can be only tenable if the weak form is defensible.

Three Arguments to rebut "Neglected Alternative" Objection

1. The argument in "Conclusions from the above concepts"

> Space represents no property at all of things in themselves nor does any relation of them to one another, i.e., no determination of them that attaches to objects themselves and that would remain even if one were to abstract from all the subjective conditions of intuition. For neither absolute nor relative determinations can be intuited prior to the existence of the things to which they pertain, thus be intuited *a priori*. (A26/B42)

This passage was, as we have seen, Trendelenburg's direct target. Kant was interpreted by him (and Kemp Smith) to argue here that the apriority of space is by itself sufficient proof that it is merely a subjective condition of intuition. However, this passage

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not sure if this is true to the historical controversy of the "neglected alternative" objection. I think of the disputed possibility as not only conceptual but also metaphysical.

[13] See Sassen, 99f.

[14] The above distinction of the weak and strong forms of the "neglected alternative" objection is different from Allison's. He says: "As initially developed by Kant's contemporaries, it [the neglected alternative objection] took a "strong" and a "weak" form, corresponding to the realistic and the idealistic interpretations of the Leibnizian monadology, respectively. According to the "strong" form, it is deemed possible that space is a form of human apprehension and things in themselves actually are in space or spatial. According to the "weak" form, it is deemed possible that space is such a subjective form, but that the realm of things in themselves (conceived as Leibnizian monads) contains an analogue of space." (Allison, 347n61; the phrase in the brackets mine.) Without a specific mention, my comments on the weak form and the strong form of the "neglected alternative" refer to the ones explained in the text.

may be interpreted to address and argue against the alternative that space also resides in things in themselves. Prof. Lisa Shabel presents the following argument as an interpretation of the above passage.[15]

1. If F is an intrinsic determination (i.e., a determination that does not depend on our representing) of an object x, then F cannot be represented by us as a feature of x a priori.
2. Space is represented by us a priori.
3. Space is a determination of objects.
4. Space is not an intrinsic determination of objects but the determination provided by our representation.

Because the "intrinsic determinations" of objects just mean the mind-independent properties or relations of things in themselves, the conclusion is supposed to imply that space is not the properties or relations of things in themselves. I do not try disputing this way of interpreting the above passage, but just examining the quality of the argument itself.

The initial problem is that to infer the conclusion (4.) as is stated deductively, we need an additional premise that space is either an intrinsic determination of objects or the determination provided by our representation, and not both. This begs the question against the "neglected alternative" critics. However, since the issue here is not whether space (as we encounter in experience) is a determination provided by our representation, which has been conceded by the critics, but whether space is an intrinsic determination of

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[15] This interpretive argument is presented in her seminar on Kant in 2002 Spring Quarter at the Ohio State University, of which I was a participant.

objects. Therefore, we can simplify the conclusion (4.) to:

4'. Space is not an intrinsic determination of objects.

By doing so, we can overcome the initial problem of avoiding begging the question while making the argument deductive.

Then, it at first appears that the "neglected alternative" objectors concede the second premise, so the success of this argument seemingly depends on the first premise and the third premise. However, actually the most crucial but controversial premise is the second premise.

Let me first look at the third premise. The "determination" of objects in Kantian literature means the property or relation of objects (that may be mind-dependent), so the third premise means that space is a property or relation of objects (that may be mind-dependent). However, this premise will be objected to by one traditional and influential view of space, i.e., substantivalism, which is often attributed to Isaac Newton[16] and to Samuel Clarke as the defender of his view of space to Leibniz and thus is well known to Kant. This view holds that space is an objective thing or a substance comprised of points or regions where other things are disposed. Without some additional argument, Kant cannot exclude substantivalism of space.

Fortunately, the third premise does not seem to be crucial. For we can reconstruct the above argument in the following way.

1''. If F is either an intrinsic determination of a substance x or a substance x itself,

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[16] See Sklar, 467; though Sklar also notes there that Newton actually maintained that space is 'an attribute of Deity[.]'

then F cannot be represented a priori by us.

2''. Space is represented by us a priori.

3''. Space is neither an intrinsic determination of substances nor a substance itself.

This new argument does not presuppose that space is a determination of objects, but is still deductive and concludes with the non-spatiality of things in themselves.

Now let me move on to the (revised) first premise. The "neglected alternative" objectors will not concede this premise. This is obvious from the quotation of Kemp Smith explaining Trendelenburg's point: "The central thesis of the rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment was, indeed, that the independently real can be known by a priori thinking." (113) The first premise is merely denying this "central thesis[.]" Specifically about space, the critics will first point out that it seems at least possible that we have the intuition of space a priori, i.e., not gained from sense experience, that luckily represents a substance or a determination of things in themselves. This accident representation view is far-fetched, but still seems to be a logical possibility; and the weak form of the "neglected hypothesis" needs only this possibility to succeed.

Moreover, they will secondly point out, as Paul Guyer does (363), that there is even a hypothesis that does not make our a priori perception of space accidental. According to this hypothesis, the subject's sensitivity is constituted in such a way as to blind us to any things that are not in space (or time) that corresponds to the form of our intuitions: that is, our sensitivity selects or filters things to perceive according to whether they accord with spatiotemporal order, rather than imposes or projects the order on them, so that we can perceive the spatiotemporal features of things in themselves through the forms of intuitions. If this view, which Lorne Falkenstein calls the "selection hypothesis" (424-5n4), is correct, then whatever objects we perceive to be disposed in spatiotemporal

order are really disposed as we perceive; then, there is little ground to deny that our term "space" (or "time") often refers to the mind-independent way the objects are disposed. Kant needs some additional argument to discredit the possibility of this hypothesis in order to save the above argument. However, though perhaps Kant may have an argument for the conclusion that this "selection hypothesis" is less plausible to one of the hypotheses of the sort that the sensitivity imposes or projects spatiotemporal order,[17] it is

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[17] Falkenstein argues that the "selection hypothesis" is only one of the "ways of explaining how the spatiotemporal form of our intuition is determined by the subject[,]" and that it is not the most likely because the hypothesis that a human subject's constitution follows some sort of algorithm to project everything in an object onto a spatiotemporal grid (rather than to select only certain things) is more plausible on an evolutionary ground. He argues that "a cognitive system that is able to project as much information about the environment as possible onto its sensory array would be evolutionarily advantaged over one restricted to displaying just those objects that already happen to be arrayed in conformity with its own innate forms." (Falkenstein, 424-5n4)
However, there are two problems about this reasoning. First, it is based on a theory of natural selection, which is ascertained by empirical or scientific research. If we suppose with Kant that such a research can reveal only the phenomena on the level of empirical objects and not on the level of things in themselves (in the transcendental sense), it is doubtful whether the theory of natural selection can provide a good reason for choosing among hypotheses about cognitive relation, projective or selective, between human subjects and things in themselves. Therefore, anyone who defends this supposition of Kant's may well be skeptical of Falkenstein's evolutionary argument. Second, given that the theory of natural selection provides a good reason for choosing among the "projection hypothesis" and the "selection hypothesis;" I am not sure of the alleged evolutionary advantage of the projection system. Since the amount of information that we can handle within a period of time short enough to live out on each occasion, we need to select information relevant to our survival. Then, the "selection hypothesis" may be evolutionarily more advantageous than the "projection hypothesis" provided that the criterion of the selection somehow reflects our need to focus our cognitive capacity on information relevant to our survival.
A possible general problem about the view that we impose or project the spatiotemporal order on things is that supposedly we as agents have relations to things in themselves (unless we ascribe to Kant or any other person who favors the projection or imposition hypothesis an implausible claim that in the process of cognition we actually create external objects that we as agents have relations to instead to things in themselves). We navigate our actions according to our spatiotemporal cognitions of the world. If the imposition or projection hypothesis is correct, then it is not clear how we can successfully navigate so and do not find any problem in action from the divergence between our cognitions and the world of things in themselves. If we suppose that there is something in things in themselves corresponding to space (and time) as the form(s) of our intuitions, this problem will be resolved; however, in that case, it may be hard to see why what correspond to space (and time) as the form(s) of our representations cannot be properly called a "space" (or a "time").

not clear if he has an argument that the "selection hypothesis" is impossible. For the "selection hypothesis" incorporates important claims in Aesthetics. The forms of our intuitions are still ultimately determined by the constitution of our sensitivity and not by the affecting things. The necessity of some synthetic propositions about spatial objects is explained and guaranteed. For, because of the constraint of our constitution of our sensibility, we can perceive only those things that are disposed in a certain spatiotemporal order, so certain synthetic propositions about spatial objects necessarily obtain about the selected objects (even mind-independently).

If Kant does not have a way to do without the first premise as is stated, unless Kant can deny the possibility of both the accident representation view and the "selection hypothesis," he cannot refute at least the weak from of the "neglected alternative" objection by the above line of argument. However, Kant can replace the first premise and the second premise with the following more plausible ones:

1*. If F is either an intrinsic determination of a substance x or a substance x itself, then (even after certain reflection) we do not have an a priori right or justification to have any belief about F.

2*. We (at least after certain reflection[18]) do have an a priori right or justification

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My comment above may give some defense of the claim of the strong form of the "neglected alternative" hypothesis that some version of the claim that in addition to the form of our intuitions, "space" (or "time") refers to something that subsists in itself or attaches to things in themselves, is more plausible than Kant's position that space (or time) is merely the form of our sensibility. However, as I said in Introduction, I cannot provide a full examination of this claim as well as of the arguments other than the three I pick out in this paper for the weak form of the "neglected alternative" hypothesis that it is possible that "space" (or "time") refers to something that subsists in itself or attaches to things in themselves.

[18] It may be implausible that even without any reflection on our epistemic conditions on our beliefs about space (as we encounter in experience), we have an a priori right or justification to have some belief about space.

to have some belief about space.

(3*. Space is neither an intrinsic determination of substances nor a substance itself.)

The premise 1* does not beg the question against the above supposed "neglected alternative" critics by denying that the independently real can be known by a priori thinking. Kant can concede, as the critics claim, that we may have an a priori access to the independently real. However, it is implausible that we are a priori ***justified*** to have some belief about the independently real. For even if we have an a priori access to the independently real, we do not have a way to make it sure by a priori thinking that we have such an access, so we do not have an a priori justification to have a belief about the independently real. That is, Kant can plausibly deny that we are a priori justified in believing that we a priori represent a thing in itself or its objective features, even if we actually do so, for we have no a priori way to ascertain this point. This is the view expressed in the first premise. Specifically about space, as the critics claim, we may have an a priori access to knowledge about space: our intuition of space may luckily represent something real, or the form of our sensibility may let us perceive only things in accord with that. However, we cannot make it sure by a priori thinking that such a possibility is true, so we are not a priori justified in believing that.

Arguably this line of reasoning is what leads Kant in as early as the section three of Aesthetic ("Transcendental Exposition of the Concept of Space") to infer from the existence of supposedly synthetic a priori knowledge in geometry that "it [space] has its seat merely in the subject" (B41; the word in the brackets mine), though I do not insist so. Some may have a qualm about whether we have a right to have some a priori belief concerning geometry due to the existence of several logically incompatible sets of axioms

of geometry and to the fact that apparently part of the most intuitive geometry, Euclidian geometry, all of whose propositions Kant seems to believe to be necessarily true, turns out through empirical investigation to be false as applied to physical space.[19] However, as far as the "neglected alternative" critics are concerned, they seemingly concede to Kant that some synthetic claims about space can be known by us a priori, and this concession apparently implies revised premise two, i.e., that we have an a priori right or justification to have some synthetic beliefs about space. Then, it seems that the above argument at least works against the critics in an *ad hominem* way.

However, this expectation is probably delusional. Here comes the problem about the second premise both in the original argument and in the revised one. In the original argument, the second premise says, space is represented by us a priori; and in the revised argument, it says that we (at least after certain reflection) have an a priori right or justification to have some belief about space. The problem is that both claims may either beg the question or involve equivocation in relation to the conclusion of the argument. If these claims are presented to the "neglected alternative" critics, they may well not accept

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[19] However, recent scholarship on Kant may have shown this point not to be so fatal to Kant's claim that we have synthetic a priori knowledge about space and their consequences. See Falkenstein, 257-8. There Falkenstein summarizes a set of interpretations of Kant that are compatible with the situation that the large-scale structure of the world or the very small-scale structure of the submicroscopic world is appropriately described by geometrical principles that we have no a priori access to but are discovered through actual empirical studies. One of these interpretations is William Harper's. He (according to Falkenstein) establishes that for Kant, the perception of solid, medium-sized physical objects demands that we extrapolate from the observed, momentarily facets they show to us to draw inferences about the aspects these objects would show if they rotated; and that in order to do this we must suppose certain geometrical propositions to be necessarily true of the local space of the world around us where these medium-sized objects are disposed (though not of the fine or global structure of space) in advance of experience, i.e., before actually seeing the objects rotate. Because it takes too much space and is beyond my capacity to examine these interpretations and their compatibility with the existence of non-Euclidian geometries and the physical reality of one of them, I will try it in this paper.

them without the qualification that the what referred to by the term "space" in these sentences is what we encounter in experience. Despite all Kant has shown in Aesthetics, they will claim, our word "space" may refer to a thing which is not represented by us a priori or about which we (even after certain reflection) do not have a priori right or justification to have any belief. Metaphysical Exposition and Transcendental Exposition of Aesthetics explicates our notion of space as we encounter in experience, so they cannot establish the definitive characteristics of space in general unless Kant has already given us some independent reason to believe that the word "space" does not refer to anything but a thing we encounter in experience. However, the above argument is supposed to establish this claim. Thus, the second premise(s) seems to beg the question unless it is qualified to apply only to space as we encounter in experience. If it is qualified in such a way, unless the conclusion is qualified to apply only to space as we encounter in experience, the argument is not deductively valid. However, if the conclusion is thus qualified, it just says that space as we encounter in experience is neither an intrinsic determination of substances nor a substance itself: this does not deny the possibility that there is some other thing we refer to by our word "space," which is either an intrinsic property or relation of substances or a substance itself. If the above argument at first appears to be fatal to the "neglected alternative" objection, it is merely because the word "space" in both the second premise and in the conclusion has the uniform sense though in fact it in the second premise can legitimately mean space only as we encounter in experience while the word "space" in the conclusion means space in general: if so, it involves the fallacy of equivocation.

Kant may well reply that one cannot properly call something "space" if it does not have the characteristic specified by the second premise, i.e., being represented by us a priori or being something about which we (at least after certain reflection) have an a priori right or justification to have some belief. Since we do not have any idea about space except about space as we encounter in experience, a thing must share the characteristic that space has in order to be properly called "space:" the only criterion for something to be a space is that it shares the feature of space as we encounter in experience.

However, this semantic claim can be doubted in two ways. First, some of the "neglected alternative" critics may argue that actually it is not necessary that a thing share any feature that space as we encounter in experience possesses in order to be appropriately called a "space;" that if the thing somehow *correlates* with space as we encounter in experience, it can properly called "space" even if it does not share any of its significant characteristics. Let me explain the point using an analogy. Heat as a phenomenal quality, obviously essentially mind-dependent, correlates with a feature in the world, i.e., the motion of molecules, which is mind-independent. Of course, these two kinds of properties are totally different, but the latter is somehow tracked by the former: when we feel hot, the motion of molecules around is intense, and the hotter we feel, the more intense the movement of molecules around is. Because of this correlation, we can properly call the motion of molecules "heat." The critics of Kant may argue that in the same way, space as a form of the sensibly intuited may have a correlate in things in themselves, and that if so, then we can properly call that correlate "space." They may add that indeed Kant himself in one place calls the thing in itself as the "true correlate" of "representations of our sensibility[.]" (A30/B45) If it is admitted that there is some correlation between intuitions and things in themselves, there is little reason to think of it as impossible that something in things in themselves correlates with space as a form of

our intuitions and thus is properly called a “space.”

The above view may not sound convincing for Kantians. The correlation between heat as a phenomenal quality and the motion of molecules is a causal relation: the heat as a phenomenal quality is caused by the motion of molecules. Then, if space as a from of our intuitions is somehow caused by a thing in itself, or if spatial objects in our experience are caused by things in themselves, we may properly call something in the world of things in themselves “space.” However, Kant argues that causality is merely a form of understanding and that the concept of cause has no proper application to the world of things in themselves. Even if Kant is correct, this point may not be fatal to the above suggestion. First, some may argue that the needed type of correlation may not be limited to causation. However, let me disregard this possibility since I cannot develop it into a full-fledged idea. However, secondly, since Kant sometimes talks of the affection of things in themselves on our mind or representations (ex. A19/B33) and affection may naturally be considered to be a sort of causation, even Kant might have to admit that some type of causal relation can obtain between things in themselves and our intuitions. Though we need to engage in interpretation of relevant passage in order to specify and evaluate Kant’s view of causality and of affection,that is beyond my capacity and the scope of this paper. Thus, let me move onto the second response to the semantic claim that it is necessary that a thing shares the feature that space as we encounter in experience has, i.e., being represented by us a priori or being something about which we (at least after certain reflection) have an a priori right or justification to have some belief, in order to be appropriately called a “space.”

Some of the “neglected alternative” critics may concede that for something to be properly called “space,” it must be similar in a sufficient number of significant respects to space as we encounter in experience. However, they may still assert that it does not have

to be completely similar (qualitatively identical) to space as we experience; specifically, if a thing is like space as we encounter in experience in a sufficient number of significant respects, it needs not to share the relational characteristic of being represented by us a priori or being something about which we (at least after certain reflection) have an a priori right or justification to have some belief.[20]

There are many other features that we associate with space as we experience than that relational characteristic. Kant himself points out many other characteristics. As we saw above, Guyer's "selection hypothesis" accommodates important claims in Aesthetics: the forms of our intuitions are ultimately determined by the constitution of our sensitivity and not by the affecting things; the necessity of some synthetic propositions about spatial objects is explained and guaranteed. There are still other propositions Kant hold about space: as Falkenstein summarizes, "In the Metaphysical Expositions alone, Kant remarks that space and time are orders in which various matters are disposed, not properties that various matters may have in common or kinds to which they might belong, that they are unlimited, and that they have mereological structure. In the Anticipations, he remarks that they are infinitely divisible….He seems as well to have believed that space has Euclidean metric and affine structure." (428) For all Kant has told us, however, some mind-independent thing may be able to possess all of these characteristics since there does not seem to be any incoherence in that supposition; and specifically, if the selection hypothesis is true, there is little wonder even if it turns out that many of these characteristics are satisfied by some mind-independent thing. For according to the selection hypothesis, the subject's sensitivity is constituted in such a way as to blind us to any things that do not correspond to the form of our intuitions as space we encounter in

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[20] As you will notice, this paragraph and the following part in this section are greatly influenced by Falkenstein, 304-8 & 428n23.

experience. Further, it may have still other features of what we (even if not Kant) generally take space to have, such as that two or more objects cannot be in the same place (at the same time), that the same object cannot be in different disconnected places (at the same time), or that objects cannot suddenly disappear from one place and appear at another without passing over intervening locations. (Cf. Falkenstein, 305-6) It may even correspond to the way the appearances are ordered in our intuitions in the sense that some relations any given thing in itself has to other things in themselves might turn out to correspond to the neighborhood relations its appearance has to the appearances of its surroundings. (Cf. Falkenstein, 307) I do not find some argument of Kant's that demonstrates that a mind-independent thing cannot have the above characteristics. If it has many of these characteristics, then it seems to be perfectly appropriate to call it "space" even if it lacks the characteristic specified by the second premise, i.e., being represented by us a priori or being something about which we (at least after certain reflection) have an a priori right or justification to have some belief. If so, the above argument is at least far from being conclusive against the "neglected alternative" objection.

2. Argument from Note 2 of *Prolegomena*

The above response to Kant at one point argues from the meaningfulness of calling "space" something other than space as we encounter in experience that something that we do not encounter in experience can be a space. However, those sympathetic to Kant may find the apparent meaningfulness to be illusory. Is there any argument to show it is so?

Let me examine the argument that directly attacks the possible meaningfulness of calling "space" something other than space as we encounter in experience, which is at issue in the former argument. Gardner presents another argument to refute the "neglected

alternative" hypothesis based on the above passage from Note 2 of *Prolegomena*.[21] Let me first re-quote the passage.

> I would very much like to know how then my claims must be framed so as not to contain any idealism. Without doubt I would have to say: that the representation of space not only is perfectly in accordance with the relation that our sensibility has to objects, for I have said that, but that it is even fully similar to the object; an assertion with which I can connect no meaning, as little as with the assertion that the sensation of red is similar to the property of cinnabar that excites this sensation in me. (Kant 1783, 41: the Academy Edition vol.4, 289-90)

Here comes Gardner's interpretation:

> Kant's underlying point is that we cannot entertain comparisons of the forms of our sensibility with other, non-sensible forms, because we cannot stand outside our mode of cognition. We have no notion of what our sensibility is, except in terms of the world of our objects of experience that it makes possible for us; we cannot objectify our intuitive cognitive powers in a way that transcends the conditions under which we can recognize them as ours. Our knowledge of space and time is perspectival knowledge from their own inside: we can know our sensibility 'completely, but always only under the conditions of space and time' (A43/B60) Since we cannot conceive our sensibility as having a constitution in itself, we can conceive space and time only as forms of sensibility: so it makes no sense for us to suppose that something non-sensible could be like space and time, nor that

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[21] Gardner does not present this argument as conclusive. (110) However, he takes the argument to contribute to making "intelligible that Kant should have regarded his proof of transcendental idealism from our representations of space and time as entailing his ontological denial [of independently real space and time]." (111; the phrase in the brackets mine.)

something could be left of space and time if our sensibility were subtracted. (Gardner, 110)

Gardner's point seems to be that if space and time are our forms of our sensibility, then since we cannot represent space and time independently of our mode of cognition, we cannot stand in a position to be able to compare them with some features in things in themselves. Therefore, we can neither make sense of space and time except as the forms of our sensibility, nor make sense of the (qualitative) identity or resemblance of features in things in themselves with them.[22] If so, we cannot properly call anything mind-independent "space" (or time) since the only ground for calling something "space" (or "time") is that we can meaningfully and truly claim that it is like space (or time) as a form of our sensibility.[23]

As in the first section, I will not question the appropriateness of Gardner's interpretation of Kant: I will just focus on whether the argument can rebut the "neglected alternative" objection. The initial reaction of the "neglected alternative" critics will be that it is very implausible to claim that philosophers and ordinary people speak meaninglessly whenever they talk about space (and time) as existing independently of us, or whenever they talk about objects disposed in space (and time) as existing independently of us. However, since this does not point out what is wrong about the argument itself, the

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[22] If this is Kant's argument, it is basically the same as one of Berkeley's reasons for his famous Likeness Principle that "an idea can be like nothing but an idea[.]" (Berkeley, 105: §8 of Part1) In *A Treaties Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Berkeley argues for this principle that "[i]f we look into our thoughts, we shall find it impossible for us to conceive a likeness except only between our ideas." (loc. cit.) Jonathan Dancy interprets this claim as follows: "we cannot conceive a resemblance or likeness without conceiving the things that are supposed to be alike; but if the only things we can conceive are ideas, the only likeness we can conceive is between ideas." (Berkeley, 200n32) However, I do not know whether Kant is directly or indirectly influenced by Berkeley on this point.

[23] Though the last claim is not represented in the quotation, I think this is a fair rendering of Gardner,

argument may succeed in establishing the conclusion despite the intuitive implausibility of the conclusion.

However, there are a few objections to the argument itself. First, the argument seems to falsely presuppose that Kant has established that we cannot directly perceive some mind-independent features of things. If, as Guyer's "selection hypothesis" tells us, the forms of our sensibility only select those we can perceive, then we can perceive something mind-independent directly, i.e.,[24] without some intermediary being perceived (logically or temporarily) prior to that. Unless the "selection hypothesis" is excluded by Kant's arguments, which is unlikely as we saw above, Kant cannot properly presuppose that we cannot directly perceive or conceive of something mind-independent (in the transcendental sense). If we can conceive of something mind-independent, then we can make sense of the likeness or resemblance between the forms of our intuitions and something mind-independent. Then, it is possible that we properly call something independently real "space" (or "time").

Second, this argument apparently depends on a version of verification principle of meaning, which the "neglected alternative" critics do not accept. The argument claims that we cannot meaningfully talk of the resemblance between two things unless we can conceive of both, and that to conceive of them, we must encounter them in experience (i.e., under the forms of our sensibility). The "neglected alternative" critics may well claim that we can make sense of talk of the resemblance between two things without encountering them in experience. Obviously, the verificationism as a principle must be somehow defended against many standard objections.[25] And at least in this case, the

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108-11.

[24] Carrier, 104-5.

[25] See Lycan, 119-28 for the standard objections against the verificationism of meaning.

non-verificationists like the "neglected alternative" critics seem to be correct. In the end of the last section where I talk about the possible features that something mind-independent may share with, and hence in which it may be similar to, space as we encounter in experience, it does not appear that I make meaningless claims, even given that we cannot encounter the mind-independent in experience.

If we remove the controversial verificationist claim, it is not at all clear how the argument can succeed. Without the verificationist claim, the question is not "what *we* can achieve cognitively with respect to space and time[,]" but "whether this exhausts what *can* be achieved cognitively --- e.g. by God --- with respect to space and time[,]" as Gardner himself admits (110; italics his). However, the argument is concerned only with the former question, and it does not say anything about the latter question. Without the verification principle, we can meaningfully and truthfully say that it is possible that there is really a resemblance between space (and time) as the form(s) of our sensibility and something mind-independent, even if *we* cannot know it.

3. Henry Allison's Reconstructed Argument

Gardner's above interpretation of passage in Note 2 of *Prolegomena* does not seem to work against the "neglected alternative" objection. However, this is surely not the only interpretation of that passage. In particular, Gardner's interpretation does not put much emphasis on Kant's analogy between the claim about the resemblance of the representation of space with the object and the claim about the resemblance of the sensation of red with the property of cinnabar that excites this sensation in us. We perhaps should take this analogy more seriously. The point of the analogy seems to be the contrast between a mind-dependent thing and a mind-independent thing in both cases.

Henry Allison tries to reconstruct an argument from the materials of Aesthetic, and,

though Allison does not say so, probably also from the above quoted passage in Note 2 of *Prolegomena*: for his argument centers on the contrast between the mind-dependence of space qua the form of what are sensibly intuited and the mind-independence of things in themselves. As far as I understand, the argument goes as follows (Allison, 111-4, esp. 112-3).

1. Space is a form of what are sensibly intuited.

2. The notion of such a form involves being given in virtue of a particular mental capacity's, i.e., our sensibility's, manner of representation.

3. Therefore, neither space nor any properties thereof can be meaningfully predicated of things, where these things are considered independently of that particular mental capacity's mode of representing them.

4. By definition, things in themselves are things thus considered.

5. Therefore, neither space nor any properties thereof can be meaningfully predicated of things in themselves.

In addition, Allison deals with a supposed objection to the argument. The supposed objector argues as follows. The above argument only succeeds in refuting the claim that a form of the sensibly intuited is numerically identical with a form of things in themselves. The "neglected alternative" objection is not that, but rather that there is something in things in themselves corresponding to this form of sensibly intuited. The above argument does not exclude such a possibility, i.e., that there is something in themselves that is qualitatively identical with or similar to space as a form of the sensibly intuited. Allison replies as follows. The above argument does exclude such a possibility. Mind dependence

or being represented in virtue of our sensibility is a defining ("essential"[26]) characteristic of the things that are sensibly intuited, and mind independence is a defining characteristic of the things in themselves, i.e., things considered independently of being represented. (Presumably this is the restatement of the premises from 1 to 4.) The talk of qualitative identity or similarity between the properties one of which is mind-dependent and another of which is mind-independent does not make sense.

There are several problems about the above argument. Let me first mention two possible qualms that I do not pursue in detail. First, the second premise is dependent on Allison's prior interpretive analysis on the form of what are sensibly intuited ("form of sensibility$_2$" in Allison's term). (Allison, 107) While being a form of the things that are sensibly intuited surely implies that it is given or represented through the act of our sensibility, it can still be doubted whether mind dependence or being given *in virtue of* our sensibility is its definitional characteristic. In case Allison's interpretive analysis were incorrect, then the form of what are sensibly intuited were not necessarily given in virtue of our sensibility's mode of representation. Then, though *ex hypothesi* the "neglected alternative" critics would still concede that space *as we encounter in experience* is given in virtue of our sensibility's mode of representation, they could consistently deny that even given the first premise (space is a form of what are sensibly intuited), space in general must be given in virtue of our sensibility's mode of representation. If so, the critics could maintain that space as we do not encounter in experience may be meaningfully predicated of things in themselves, which are, by definition, things considered independently of our sensibility's mode of representing them. I do not pursue this point partly because the examination of Allison's prior analysis will take some space

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[26] Allison regards the space of sensibility as "something that involves an essential reference to mind[.]" (113)

and partly because I believe, as we will see, that the "neglected alternative" critics do not even need to concede the first premise, without which the third premise does not follow from the second premise.

Second, the fourth premise presents Allison's specific understanding of Kant's notion of things in themselves.[27] As we saw in note eight, there are two traditions in interpreting "things in themselves:" two object view and two aspect view. Allison's view expressed in the fourth premise, i.e., that by definition, things in themselves are things that are considered independently of sensibility's mode of representing them, is one representative instance of two aspect view. One may suspect that this reliance on the specific interpretation of the notion of things in themselves might be problematic. For if correct is two object view, which takes "things in themselves" refer to the sets of things that are ontologically distinct from the sets of objects referred to by "appearances," then the fourth premise loses its support. If the fourth premise is replaced with such a premise that things in themselves are the sets of things that are ontologically distinct from the sets of objects called "appearances," the conclusion does not follow.

This may really be a problem. Consider the following way we may take to reconstruct the above argument as two-object-view interpreters accept:

1. Space is a form of what are sensibly intuited.

2. The notion of such a form involves being given in virtue of a particular mental capacity's, i.e., our sensibility's, manner of representation.

3'. Things in themselves are ontologically real (and thus ontologically distinct from appearances) in that they can exist independently of our mental capacity's manner of representation.

4'. Therefore, neither space nor any properties thereof can be meaningfully predicated of things in themselves.

I think that the revised third premise will not be disputed by two-object-view interpreters. The problem lies in the inference from the premises to the conclusion. The argument for fourth proposition or conclusion says that because space qua a form of what is sensibly intuited conceptually involves our sensibility's manner of representation, and because things in themselves can exist independently of our mental capacity's manner of representation, space and their properties cannot be predicated of things in themselves. This may well be false. Let me explain this point using the analogy of the redness 'of' cinnabar. Cinnabar itself can exist independently of our representational mode of vision. However, even if the redness depended on our representational mode of vision, it would still be appropriate to attribute redness to cinnabar. By analogy, it might still be appropriate to attribute spatial properties to things in themselves even if things in themselves can exist completely independently of our mode of representation while space cannot.

Perhaps Allison's argument can be adapted to the two object view in other ways, but I do not know how. If it cannot be adapted to the two object view, then the success of Allison's above argument depends on how well Allison's two aspect view can be defended.[28] Because it will take another paper to decide whether Allison's interpretation

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[27] See Allison's characterization of the notion of things in themselves in Allison, 7-8.

[28] If the "neglected alternative" critics are taken to be committed to the existence of an independently real space, then they cannot be satisfied with the possible successful result of this criticism of the argument; for space in things in themselves and spatial properties attaching to them are still mind-dependent. Historically, however, there are those "neglected alternative" critics who hold what Allison calls the strong form: it is "possible that space is a form of human apprehension and things in themselves actually are in space or spatial." (See note 14) These critics will be probably perfectly happy with this outcome.

of the notion of things in themselves is defensible, let me for now assume that Allison can successfully defend his interpretation, and move on to the next problem.

A serious concern arises about the first premise. This says that space is a form of what are sensibly intuited, and implies (through the second premise) that space is given in virtue of our sensibility's manner of representation. Allison says that this part of the argument is conceded by the "neglected alternative" critics. (Allison, 113) However, the "neglected alternative" critics may well deny this. As we saw as a response to the argument in the first section, they can concede that Kant has shown that space *as we encounter in experience* is a form of what are sensibly intuited and given in virtue of our sensibility's matter of representation, without conceding that that space in general, and specifically space as we do not encounter in experience, if any, has such features. The critics will concede (given Allison's analysis of the notion of "things in themselves") that the numerically same space as we encounter in experience cannot be meaningfully predicated of things in themselves; for that space is given in virtue of our sensibility, and things in themselves are by definition considered independently of that particular mental capacity's mode of representing them. Further, the critics will concede (again given Allison's analysis of the notion of "things in themselves") that space as we do not encounter in experience cannot share the characteristic of being given in virtue of our sensibility's manner of representation. Therefore, as Allison suggests in the reply to the supposed objection, his argument may establish that nothing numerically same as and qualitatively identical to space as we encounter in experience cannot be meaningfully predicated of things in themselves. However, the "neglected alternative" critics will still claim that space in general, specifically space as we do not encounter in experience, does not have to be numerically same as or (completely) qualitatively similar to space as we

encounter in experience.[29] Since this is the point I made in the last part of the first section, I only argue it summarily here. First, it may not be necessary that a thing share any significant feature that space as we encounter in experience possesses in order to be appropriately called a "space." If the thing appropriately *correlates* with space as we encounter in experience, it can properly be called "space." Second, if a thing is like space as we encounter in experience in a sufficient number of significant respects, it can properly be called "space." Specifically, it may need not to share the feature of being a form of what is sensibly intuited or the relational characteristic of being given in virtue of our sensibility's manner of representation. There are many other features that space as we encounter in experience has, and if something in the sphere of things in themselves shares a sufficient number of them, then there seems to be little reason not to call it "space."[30]

Conclusion

This paper has shown, if it has been successful, that though Kant has recognized and argued against the so-called "neglected alternative," i.e., the alternative that space (or time) is not only a form of our sensibility but also a thing in itself or its properties or relations; none of the three arguments of Kant's or his defenders' that I have discussed succeeds in demonstration of non-spatiality of a thing in itself in response to the weak version of "neglected alternative" objection.[31] As I mentioned at the outset, there are

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[29] This claim can be made to Kant's quoted passage in Note two of *Prolegomena* (Kant 1783, 41: the Academy Edition vol.4, 289-90). Kant there supposes that the objector will claim that the representation of space is "fully similar to the object[.]" The above point is that the "neglected alternative" theorists do not have to claim this much in order to defend the possibility of space in the realm of things in themselves.

[30] This second point is made by Falkenstein, 428n23 and Gardner, 109.

[31] As I mentioned in Introduction, the "neglected alternative" objection can take either a strong form or a weak form, and this paper is concerned primarily with the latter. While the weak version only argues that there is the possibility that in addition to the form of our sensibility, "space" refers to something that subsists in itself or attaches to things in themselves, the strong form argues in addition that some version of this

other arguments that I do not discuss which purport to do so. Therefore, our inquiry of course has not shown that all of such attempts are failures. However, it suggests that we should turn to attempts other than the above three in order to refute the weak version of "neglected alternative" objection. Our inquiry thus much circumscribes the prospect that Kant or his defenders successfully can demonstrate the non-spatiality of things in themselves in response to the "neglected alternative" critics. A conclusive argument for the non-spatiality of things in themselves will not come by so easily, given that it must also defend some controversial premises[32] the "neglected alternative" critics have conceded.

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alternative is more plausible than Kant's position that space and time are merely the forms of our sensibility. While the inquiry in this paper turns out that none of the treated three arguments succeeds in refuting the former claim that is shared by both the weak form and the strong form, it does not have much bearing on the latter claim, which is specific to the strong form. Nonetheless, see note 17.

[32] That is, claims that space (as we encounter in experience) is a form of human sensibility, that space (as we encounter in experience) is represented by us a priori, that some propositions concerning space (as we encounter in experience) are synthetic but known a priori, and the like.

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